

A
SERMON
PREACH'D AT
SALTERS-HALL,
June 28. 1708.
BEFORE THE
SOCIETIES
FOR
Reformation of Manners.

By THOMAS BRADBURY.

Publish'd at their Request.

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FROM 1952

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To the Right Honourable

PATRICK

Earl of *Marchmont*,

Viscount *Blasenberg*,

Lord POLWARTH of Polwarth,
Redbreas, and Grinla.

My LORD,

THE Societies for Reformation of Manners have two Things to recommend 'em, and fix their Praise in every Conscience.

First, The Noble Design it self, of restoring to the People a pure Language, and setting up a Fence against
a the

The Dedication.

the Debauchery and Swearing, because of which the Land mourneth. This is really a fighting the Lord's Battels. It has the Danger, the Fatigue, and the Glories of a just War. The Cause is certainly Good, and the Toil of serving it equal to the High Places of the Field. There has bin a Resisting unto Blood, in this Strife against Sin. And what can have a better show of overcoming by the Blood of the Lamb, than when Persons, under no Lure of Honour or Interest, love not their Lives unto the Death? 'Tis no wonder, that so warm an Assault upon Satan's Empire in the World, has engag'd all the Varieties of Opposition. The Frowns of Great Men, and the Falshood of others; the Banter of profane and mercenary Authors, the Spleen of those who are crouded up into a Party, have made a vast Contradiction of Sinners against 'em. But yet God has honour'd those that honour him: The Pleasure
of

The Dedication.

vii

of the Lord has prosper'd in their hands; and all the Smoke of Malice could not sully the Design, for the Wrath of Man has prais'd it. Having obtain'd Help from God, they continue to this day, displaying a Banner before them that fear him. The Work it self has a Voice to praise'em. But,

Secondly, There's a great Circumstance in the Undertaking, that will make it still dearer to every one who seeks the Peace of his Country: and that is, the near Dependence that it has upon our happy Revolution. 'Tis, I think, the Firstborn of that fruitful Blessing. After God had rais'd us up a Deliverer and a Great One, and taught him not to hold the Sword in vain, he soon appear'd at the head of this other Design, as a Terror to Evil-doers, and a Praise to them that do well. As if Providence would have this Truth distinguish'd to our Notice, That the Glory of God's Name, and that

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of a People's Rights, are in full consort to one another. Immorality and Tyranny are best resisted at the same time.

My LORD,

Each of these Considerations a-part would have turn'd my Thoughts to this Dedication: But when I reflect on 'em both together, I know no Name more agreeable to the Reformation it self, and the Revolution that it stands on. YOUR LORDSHIP'S continual Zeal for the one, and great Share in the other, are higher Arguments than any that can be fetch'd from my self. For tho'tis an Honour that I value to have this publick way of owning my Obligations to YOUR LORDSHIP; yet the Matter of this Sermon, and the Design upon which it was preach'd and printed, are indeed the main Reasons of prefixing so Great a Name to it.

'Tis never so safe for an Author to enlarge upon any Person's Worth, as when a bright Reputation leads the Character,
and

and keeps at a distance before it. With
this Security I could write of YOUR
LORDSHIP's extensive Service to our
common Faith and Liberty. I have all
the Voice of Fame on my side, and can
never expect such an Opportunity of being
incharg'd with giving flattering Titles.
The Ways that a designing Providence
has taken to make YOUR LORDSHIP
a polish'd Shaft, give us such a Pro-
cess of Divinity, that whoso is wise
will observe these things. How beau-
tiful is the whole Scene of the heavenly
Conduct, when we make a Review?

God has employ'd YOUR LORD-
SHIP for the Service of Religion and
Property, in all the Extremes of Life.
You have known the Charges of Integrity
in an evil day, and the Heart of a
Stranger in foreign Parts. But as all
his Ways are Judgment, so the Benefit
of this appear'd upon that happy Turn,
when our Enemies were found Liars,
and we trod upon their High Places.

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The Dedication.

He that has shown you great and sore Troubles, has again reviv'd and enlarg'd you on every side. The same Grace that carry'd you thro long Adversities, without any flaw in Conscience, has bin equally your Guard in a prosperous State. We may take it for a double Honour that Providence has put upon **YOUR LORDSHIP**, that you should flee with our Laws and Liberties, and again return with 'em, among those who had long waited for the Consolation of Israel. 'Twas a valuable Change to all good Men, that **YOUR LORDSHIP**, who had ventur'd Honour, Estate, and Life, when Iniquity was running in like a Flood, should afterwards be so understood by the Great King **WILLIAM**, as to serve him in the highest Offices: Once to represent his Royal Person as High Commissioner, and several times to preside in that Parliament as Lord Chancellor. But it compleats the Reputation,
that

The Dedication.

xi

that YOUR LORDSHIP carry'd
no Defilement into these Places, and
brought none out of 'em.

My LORD,

Your active Zeal for the Protestant
Succession, the eminent part that you
bore in the late Union; your Tenderness
for the Rights of human Nature, and
the Faith that was once deliver'd to the
Saints; have endear'd you to the best
Observers. Your personal Carriage has
been so becoming the Gospel, and all your
political Measures so uniform to the late
Revolution, that I might with justice
enough have made this Epistle longer.
But I shall need YOUR LORDSHIP'S
pardon for saying so much, and that
of many others for saying no more.

I will therefore conclude with most
heartly Wishes, That He whose Mercy
endures for ever may perfect that which
concerns You: That in the Dusk of
Life, your Light may shine more and
more unto a perfect Day: That the
Beloved

*Beloved of the Lord may dwell in safety
by him: That you may digest and
improve the Peace of Great Britain
May YOUR LORDSHIP be the
Ornament and Example of a Noble
Family; and when you have served
your Generation according to the Will
of God, and come to the Grave as a
Shock of Corn fully ripe, may you never
want a Man to stand before the Lord
May your House be so with God, and
to walk before him blameless, that he
may keep his Covenant with 'em to many
Generations. This is, and shall be
the Heart's Desire and Prayer of,*

My LORD,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most Obedient and

Most Faithful Servant,

Thomas Bradbury

A
S E R M O N

F O R
Reformation of Manners.

E Z R A VI. 14.

The Elders of the Jews builded, and they prosper'd thro the Propheſying of Haggai the Prophet, and Zechariah the Son of Iddo ; and they builded and finiſh'd it, according to the Commandment of the God of Iſrael, and according to the Commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes Kings of Perſia.

THIS Day renews our *ſolemn Meeting*, in purſuance of a great Deſign ; the Service that falls to my Share, is to ſtreng- 1 Sam.
then your Hands in God : And theſe xxiii. 16.
 B Words

Words may be the Ground and Scheme of what I have to say, as they give us a Case parallel to your own. 'Tis more than the Story of one Age, being written
 Rom. xv. 4. *for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the Earth are come.*

There are three things observable in the Text, which may give us the Rules, the Defence, and Success of the Reformation you're come about: So that, in looking back upon the one, I shall have a fair Advantage to describe and hearten the other.

- I. Here's an Account of the Work it self, which *the Elders of the Jews* were employ'd in, and that was rebuilding their City and Temple.
- II. The Authority they have for it is of two sorts, *The Commandment of the God of Israel*, which gives Law and Life together; and the several Orders of *Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes* Kings of Persia.
- III. We are told what the Success of this Attempt is owing to, *They prosper'd thro the Propheying of Haggai the Prophet, and Zechariah the Son of Iddo.*

The

The First of them explains the Design it self to Reason and Conscience; the Second guards it with Protection and Argument; and the Third gives in those Supports that made it easy then, and wou'd make it perfect afterwards: All these may be fetch'd out of their Story into yours. The Conformity and Likeness of the two Cases is so strong, that I may speak to 'em both together.

I. That which *the Elders of the Jews*, and those vast numbers of the People who fell in with 'em, did, was to *build the City*, which God had *chosen to place his Name there*: But, in a more especial manner, they were to *set up the House of the Lord*. 'Twas this that made them *the Perfection of Beauty, the Joy of* Lam. ii. 15. *the whole Earth; a glorious high Throne from the beginning was the Place of their* Jer. xvii. 12. *Sanctuary*. But now, for a long time, *the Ways of Sion had mourn'd, because* Lam. i. 4, *none came to her solemn Feasts, all her* 10. *Gates were desolate: The Adversary spread out his Hands upon all her pleasant things, and the Heathen entred into her Sanctu- ary, whom God commanded, that they shou'd not enter into the Congregation.* This was

1 Chron.

xxix. 3.

Isa. lxiv.

10, 11.

Dan. ix.

17.

Ezr. ix. 8.

Ezr. i. 3.

the main Wound of their Captivity, and struck the tenderest part in every one that cou'd say with *David*, *I have set mine Affection to the House of my God*. *Isaiah* bewails it, tho he saw it a great way off, thro the distance of many Ages : He had it describ'd only in Figures and Visions, but yet it was so dismal to him, that he complains with all the heartiness of a Sufferer : *Thy holy Citys are a Wilderness, Sion is a Wilderness, Jerusalem a Desolation ; our holy and beautiful House, where our Fathers prais'd thee, is burnt with Fire, and all our pleasant things laid wast*. *Daniel* liv'd in the heat of the Captivity, and his main Supplication is, that God wou'd *cause his Face to shine upon his Sanctuary, that was desolate, for the Lord's sake*. And when the People had a little reviving in their own Bondage, you find no Design so early with 'em, as that of repairing the Temple. The Proclamation it self, that open'd their Passage, is in these Terms, *Who is there among you of all his People? his God be with him, let him go up, and build the House of the Lord God of Israel*. That your Design has some resemblance of this, will appear from those things that the Scripture has laid down, as the chief

Reformation of Manners.

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chief Glories of the Temple; that it was,

1st. The Token of God's gracious Presence with that People.

2^{ly}. The great Instrument and Place of his Worship among them.

3^{ly}. Their Assurance of a *Messiah's* Appearance and Kingdom: They built it at first, and restor'd it the second time, *in hope of the Promise made of God unto* Act. xxvi. *their Fathers, unto which Hope the twelve* 6, 7.

Tribes, instantly serving God Day and Night, expected to come. Now all these Characters may, without any force, be united to the *Reformation* you have undertaken, as will appear when each Particular comes under our View.

1. The Temple was a *Token between* 2 Sam. vii. *God and them*, that he wou'd no more *pass by 'em*, but live amongst 'em, and own 'em for his People. He kept House in those Parts of the World: *In Judah* Ps. lxxvi. *he was well known, and his Name great in* 1, 2.

Israel; he had his Tabernacle in Salem, and his Dwelling-place in Sion. This one Thought deserv'd all the contending Zeal they show'd for the Temple; 'twas worth their while to take a long Journey, and cut their way thro Fatigue and Danger, for the Honour of having it known, that they were a *People in such*

Pf. cxlvii. ult. *a Case, as to have the Lord for their God.*

To this great end does a popular Reformation serve: It lets us see that God has not forsaken us, when there are any amongst us, who dare by no means be guilty of forsaking him. Nothing looks so much like his Presence with a Nation under the Gospel, as when Judgment runs down their Streets like a River, and Righteousness as a mighty Stream: He has done *dwelling in Temples made with Hands*, and shows himself to be in the midst of a People another way; and that is, by *pouring the Spirit upon us from on high*. The more there is of this, the better is our Claim to the Title of a Nation *sought out, and not forsaken*.

If Debauchery, Swearing, and a Contempt of Religion, were to run loose amongst us; if there were none who had a Zeal for God, when Men are making *void his Law*, we shou'd be ready to think, that as our Stupidity had left him, so his Justice had left us. Your being easy, when he's profan'd, is a giving him leave to go; and 'tis a dismal face of things, if there's *none that calls upon his Name, none that stirs up himself to take hold on a departing God*.

On

On the other hand, 'tis building him a Temple, a doing your part towards his continual Presence with you, when you will lose any thing rather than his Honour: And, *except the Lord of Hosts had* Isa. i. 9. *left us a small remnant for this Work, we shou'd have bin like unto Sodom and Gomorrah.* We were growing like 'em in a Crime that lies out of the Road, and were it not for your Zeal to stop the thick'ning Shame, we shou'd have bin like 'em in Ruin, *condemn'd with their Overthrow, as an Example to those that* 2 Pet. ii. 6. *live ungodly.* But 'tis a good Hope, that there are yet Thoughts of Peace towards us, when you stand up against those that say unto God, *Depart from Us.* The Job xxi. 14. Gospel is a glorious Argument of his Presence, that he has not done *waiting to be gracious*; but 'tis from such Designs as these that we have the most publick Evidence of its doing us good. And, *surely his Salvation is near unto them that fear* Ps. lxxxv. 9. *him, that Glory may dwell in our Land.*

2. The Temple was the Place of his Worship among them: They saw his *Glory and Power in the Sanctuary*, and the Ps. lxiii. 2. Discoverys there were so much above the common Methods of Grace, that *a Day* lxxxiv. 10. *in his Courts was better than a thousand elsewhere:*

where : So that this House stood for his Honour and their Security, a Token of his being with them, and the means of their keeping with him.

Such an Instrument of the Divine Glory is the Reformation you are laboring for ; the true Principle that guides and fires it, is a *Jealousy for the Lord of Hosts.*
 1 Kings xix. 14. You wou'd not have him dishonor'd ;
 Psal. cxix. 136. *Rivers of Water will run down the Christian's Eyes, when Men keep not his Law.*
 Such People are willing to be at any pains to retrieve the *Beauty of Holiness*, and make the Name of Christ more sacred to the World, because to *them* that believe he is precious : How much your Societys have done this way, is very apparent. Indeed, to controul an impudent Sinner, may be of no saving Advantage to him ; a Lion is still a Brute under his Chains : But Religion gets by it ; 'tis a Brightness to your own Profession, and an Encouragement to others :
 1 Thess. i. 8. These Victories of Faith have sounded forth, and your Zeal has provok'd very many.
 2 Cor. ix. 2.

3. The Temple was a means of carrying their Thoughts forwards to a *Messiah*. It shew'd 'em his Appearance in the Flesh, his obtaining an eternal Redemption

redemption for us, his spiritual Kingdom and Glory in the World, and the last putting of all things under his feet. This ^{1 Cor. xv.}
was the Gospel of that Building. If I ^{27.}
mistake not, they had a fainter Revelation of it, from the first moment there was any discourse of a Temple. For then God promis'd to build David a sure ^{2 Sam. vii.}
House. And as this was the last part ^{11.}
of the Message Nathan brought him, so 'tis the most affecting to himself. He pleads for it as the main Blessing:
Let the House of thy Servant David be ^{Ver. 26.}
establish'd before thee. Nay, he lays such a stress upon it, as to say, For this cause ^{Ver. 27.}
thy Servant has found in his heart to pray this Prayer. And he goes over with it again, as what he can by no means quit his hold of: Therefore let it please thee to bless the House of thy Servant, that it may continue before thee for ever. He had but lately grudg'd himself an House of Cedars, whilst the Ark of God was within Curtains; so that he must have a higher meaning in all this, than the Grandeur of his Family. Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that ^{A& ii. 30.}
God would, from his Loins, raise up Christ to sit on his Throne; he seeing this before, spake of him. These Desires were all

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answer'd

Ezek. xxxiv. 29. Rev. xxii. 16. Mar. xi. 10. answer'd in the Great *Plant of Renown, the Root and Offspring of David*. When he made his publick Entry into *Jerusalem*, the People that follow'd him with *Hosannas* took it in this sense, crying *Blessed be the Kingdom of our Father David*.

So that from the first Design of this Fabrick, it was to have the Virtue and Meaning of a Promise, and must lead 'em to *one greater than the Temple*. But the Revelation brightens when they come to rebuild it: *Daniel* prays for *the Sanctuary that was desolate*: The Answer of God tells him, that from *the going forth of the Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven Weeks*: As if he would have this Truth impress'd upon him, that the main Design of building the Temple was, that a Redeemer might appear there; he being the Substance of their Religion under the Law, and the Rule of that under the Gospel. And when the House had answer'd this end, 'tis to be laid aside, *trod under foot of the Gentiles*. After *the Messiah is cut off, the People of the Prince must come to destroy the City and the Sanctuary, and the End thereof should be* with

with a Flood. Again, there were still brighter Discoverys of this when they begun to build. 'Twas thus that Haggai encourag'd them, who had seen the House in her first Glory; and in comparison Hag. ii. 3. of that, this was *nothing in their eyes*: He lets 'em know, the Desire of all Na. Ver. 7. tions should come, and that would make the Glory of the later House greater than Ver. 9. of the former.

And is there nothing that looks this way in your Design? 'Tis true, we are to know Christ no more after the Flesh: 2 Cor. v. 16. he has bin once amongst us to bear the Heb. ix. 27. Sins of many; and by that one Offering x. 14. has for ever perfected them that are sanctify'd: But unto them that look for him, he is to appear the second time, without Sin unto Salvation. We, accor- 2 Pet. iii. ding to his Promise, look for a new Hea. 13. ven and a new Earth, wherein dwells Righteousness. In the days of the last Kings, the Dan. ii. 44. God of Heaven is to set up a Kingdom, that shall never be destroy'd; but shall break in pieces, and consume all other Kingdoms, and stand for ever. There are indeed several methods of leading on this great State. The Wars and clashing of Nations are to overturn, overturn, overturn, un- Ezek. xxi. til he come whose Right it is. And your 27.

Honorable Attempt has no small share in the ripening of this Glory. 'Tis pity that Learned Men should give up themselves to the Mastery of Nature and Passion, in disputing about the Time, the Scheme, and Parts of this Kingdom. However, there are two things that all sides grant to be inseparable from it, and these begin to dawn in your Societys. Then God's People shall be

{ More distinguish'd from the Wicked.
 { More united among themselves.

1. There will be a plainer Difference
 Mal. iii. ult. *between the Righteous and the Wicked, those that serve the Lord, and those that serve him not.* At the building of the
 Ezr. vi. 21. *Temple, the Jews separated themselves from all the Filthiness of the People of the Land, that they might seek the Lord God of Israel.* And when the Spirit is pour'd out to give the Gospel a greater force, what an exalted Purity will diffuse it self thro the Churches? Religion is to be the common Beauty of all
 Zech. xiv. *our Affairs: In that day there shall be*
 20, 21. *upon the Bells of the Horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the Pots of the Lord's House shall be like the Bowls before the Altar; they will have a double Consecration:*

eration: yea, every Pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be Holiness unto the Lord of Hosts. Every Act of Obedience will look like Devotion, and Devotion look like Heaven: And when things are thus improv'd and heighten'd, in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the House of the Lord of Hosts.

This is the noble Design that you are falling in with, to separate the Precious from the Vile. I look upon the Societys for Reformation as a Specimen of what the World shall know more at large. Our Religious Assemblys are a mixt Multitude; People of all Characters may hear the Gospel: But, one wou'd think, he that is hearty for you, and constant with you, goes further in an Averſion from having his Soul gather'd with Sinners, and his Life with bloody Men. As the State we are hoping for shines more and more unto a perfect Day, this will be the growing Temper of every Christian, that in his eyes a vile Person is contemn'd, but he honors them that fear the Lord. So that you are Workers together with God, catching at the Promise of his coming, making haſt to meet him; and blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing.

2. There

2. There will be a stronger Union of Affection among those that bow *their knees to Him, of whom the whole Family both in Heaven and in Earth are named.*

'Twas Corruption that divided us about little things; for *whence come Wars and Fightings among you, but from your Lusts?* And Reformation is the best way to unite us, and make us *like-minded one to another.* We give a Testimony upon such occasions, that *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all,* are of more value with us than *Meats and Drinks, New Moons and Holidays,* or the *voluntary Humility* that is *after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men.* The Charges of Superstition and Schism have flown about with so much passion, that we may call 'em *the fiery Darts of the Wicked.* This Work has confounded the general Peace of Protestants so long, that *the Romans* are in danger to come and *take away our Place and Nation.*

But your Society's tell the World, that we have something nearer at heart, than the brightning of a Name, and the Success of a Party. And this is a good Advance towards that State of things, when there shall be *no hurting or destroying in all God's holy Mountain.* For, assure

Assure your selves, Christianity will end
 just as it begun ; not in a Strife for Cir-
 cumcision or Uncircumcision, which avails Gal. v. 6.
 not any thing, but a Faith in God that
 works by Love to Men. Thus you see
 what the Scripture says of the Temple,
 and how well the Colours may be laid
 upon your Undertaking.

II. The next thing to be enquir'd af-
 ter, both in your Case and that of the
 Jews, is the AUTHORITY, that e-
 qually directs and defends such a noble
 Attempt for the Glory of God. There
 are two things of this nature in my
 Text, that will be valuable to every Con-
 science. They had a Commandment from

{ The Lord God of Israel.

{ The Kings of Persia.

I. 'Twas according to the Command-
 ment of the God of Israel. He had im-
 press'd it upon their Minds, as 'tis said,
 Every one, whose Spirit God had rais'd to Ezra i. 5.
 go up, went to build the House. He
 attended this with the Voice of his
 Word. The Prophets Haggai, and Ze-
 chariah the Son of Iddo, prophesy'd in the
 Name of the God of Israel ; and then
 they began to build. The Obligation that
 this

v. i.

this brought 'em under was so intire and compleat, that no Powers upon Earth can either improve or dissolve it. There were a great many to weaken
 Ezr. iv. 4. *the hands of the People of Judah, and*
 5. *trouble them in the Building. They hir'd*
 Ver. 23. *Counsellors against 'em to frustrate their*
Purpose. These caus'd 'em to cease by
force and power. But, it's evident, they
 Chap. v. *revive it all at once, upon the first*
Demand of the Prophets. Tatnai and
Shetharboznai, who were the King's
Treasurers on the Samaritan Side of the
River, these and their Companions made
 Ver. 3, 5. *an heavy noise against the Rebellion of*
this Act; but the Eye of their God was
upon the Jews, that they could not cause
the Work to cease.

The Authority of a Divine Command sweeps down all the Opposition that the World can make. *Darius* himself owns the Supremacy of such a Law, tho he was both a King and an Heathen, and so tempted by Interest and prepar'd by Education to deny the Rights of Heaven; yet he says, *Let the God that has caus'd his Name to dwell there, destroy all Kings and People, who shall put to their hand to alter the House of God at Jerusalem.* This will bear a fair Application

tion to YOU the Gentlemen of these Honorable Societys. You have prov'd what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable Will of God. He has demanded this Service from you, as

{ Means of Glory to God in the highest.
{ A Method of Peace upon Earth, and
an Act of Good-will toward Men.

(1.) 'Tis to the Glory of God in the highest. He has sounded the Trumpet in Zion, to call Volunteers into his Battel: Who will rise up for me against Evil. Ps. xciv. 15 doers? Who will stand up with me against the Workers of Iniquity? He puts your Tenderness for his Honour upon this issue. The Courage of Phinehas against an impudent Couple has left this Credit upon his Name, that he was zealous for his God, and made an Atonement Num. xxv. 11. for the Children of Israel: That was counted to him for Righteousness, to him, and Ps. cvi. 31. to his Seed for evermore. To say this is none of your business, is to rase out your Name from among the Living in Jerusalem. If you have a Faith that makes a Redeemer precious to yourselves, the Reproaches of those that re- Ps. lxi. 9.

D

proach

proach him will fall upon you: You will behold Transgressors and be griev'd, because they keep not God's Law.

Psalms

CXIX. 158.

You think it the Duty of Reputation to wipe off any Scandal, that's thrown upon your selves. You engage your whole Alliance in the Defence of a Good Name; and, it may be, will grow desperate in retrieving the Honour, which Malice has run away with. And has God no *Seconds* amongst us? Can you be silent, when People *blaspheme* that worthy Name by which you are call'd? What is this, but to clash with Prayer, and show that you only tell lyes upon your knees? You beg that his Name may be hallow'd, and yet will run no danger for it. 'Tis the Language of your Petition, that his Kingdom may come, and his Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. But you'll take no steps towards it; it shall rather lose ground by your Easiness and Complaisance to Sinners. What's the Religion of that Man, who expects so much from God, and will do nothing for him? Never talk of a Faith, and Hope, and Love, that have not heart enough in 'em to make a *stand* for Seriousness. If you can

can be wheedled, or hector'd, or laugh'd out of this Duty, your Principles are not of the right sort. And if they will not serve you in such a Trial, you're but poorly laid in for a dying hour.

That this is agreeable to the Will of God, and a means of *showing forth his Praise*, has bin oftentimes told you both from this, and another Pulpit. I only *stir up your pure Minds, by way of remembrance*; and will therefore leave no more than one plain Scripture with you. And he that can slight your Design, and think himself consistent to that Rule, must either have a great Knowledg, or a little Conscience: The words are, *If a Soul sin, and hear the Voice of Swearing, and is a Witness, whether he has seen it, or known of it, if he do not utter it, he shall bear his Iniquity.* 2Pet. iii. 1. Lev. v. 1.

(2.) 'Tis a means of *Peace upon Earth*, and an Act of *Good-will towards Men*. Some of your Attempts have bin sanctify'd to the offending Party; so that you have *sav'd them with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* And let such know, that he who converts a Sinner from the Error of his ways, *saves a Soul from Death, and hides a multitude of Sins.* Jude 23. Jam. v. 20.

Effect that you most earnestly wish for;
 Rom. x. 1. your *Heart's Desire and Prayer to God is,*
that the Persons may be sav'd, when you
 throw your selves into the midst of
 Prov. xxvi. *Fivebrands, Arrows, and Death,* for their
 18. Reformation. But,

If the Impression do not go so deep as
 Conscience, yet it's a means of preven-
 ting a speedier Wast of their Estates or
 Lives. They cannot spend and die so
 fast, as they might have done without
 your interposing. 'Tis no greater injury
 than wrenching a Sword out of a Mad-
 man's hand, who is going to sheath it
 in his own Bowels. Or,

If the People themselves are no bet-
 ter, it keeps the general Peace, stops the
 Taint of a Nation, and secures them
 Pf. xxxv. that are *quiet in the Land* from such who
 10. *fear not God,* and, without a prospect of
 Luk. xviii. Justice, would have *no regard to Man.*
 2. So that, as you were once very aptly
 told, your Societys are *Repairers of the*
Breach, and Restorers of Paths to dwell in.*

'Tis oftentimes for the Conviction of
 Prov. xix. others: *Smite the Scorners, and the Simple*
 25. *will beware.* You bring 'em to publick

* Plain English, pag. 41.

Shame, that all Israel may hear and fear, Deut. xiii.
 and do no more so wickedly. And will ^{11.}
 not this make the Righteous rejoice, when Ps. cvii. 42.
Iniquity is oblig'd to stop her mouth?
 Therefore 'tis a wrong Name, when the
 World call you severe and cruel. They
 never got that Word so apply'd out of
 the Bible. For God has charg'd it upon
 his People; *Thou shalt not hate thy Bro-* Lev. xix.
ther in thy heart, but shalt in any wise re- ^{17.}
buke him, and not suffer Sin upon him.

2. Another thing that flows into their
 Authority, is the Commandment of Cyrus,
 and Darius, and Artaxerxes, Kings of Per-
 sia. Cyrus was the Head of a great Re-
 volution; a Prince that came to Babylon
 for the Rescue of Human Nature from
 an insulting Tyranny. And as this was
 his Cause, the Providence of God fol-
 low'd him with a Success that look'd
 all Divine. *Nations are subdu'd before* Isa. xlv.
him, the Loins of Kings are loos'd, the ^{1, 2.}
two-leav'd Gates are open'd, the crooked
Places are made streight, the Gates of
Brass are broken in pieces, and the Bars of
Iron cut asunder. He gave 'em the first
 Grant: This was repeated by Artaxerxes
 and Darius at several times.

Now

Now it's apparent, that the Jews had their eye upon the Divinity of these Orders. As for *Cyrus*, all that he did was the Growth of an antient Prophecy, that spoke of him above two hundred years before. God said of him, *He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my Pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy Foundation shall be laid.* Nay, the Preamble of their Patent runs in this Language: *Thou saith Cyrus King of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven has given me all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and he has charg'd me to build him an House at Jerusalem.* And when they receiv'd any new Favour, they always give it a religious Turn; it was according to the good hand of their God upon them. And well they might, when some of these things were the effect of strong Convictions in the Heart of their Rulers; as appears by that Order, *Whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven, let it be done speedily for the honour of the God of Heaven; for why shou'd there be wrath against the Realm of the King, and his Sons?* So that tho the People had a grateful sense of any Royal Bounty, yet they were chiefly led to the secret

Wheel

Wheels of Providence. *Blessed be the* Ver. 27, 28
Lord God of our Fathers, that has put
such a thing as this in the King's heart, to
beautify the House of the Lord, which is
in Jerusalem, and has extended Mercy to
me before the King and his Counsellors, and
before all the King's mighty Princes: For I
was strengthen'd, as the Hand of the Lord
my God was upon me.

And, GENTLEMEN, 'tis notorious
 that such an Account as this is no way
 foreign to the History of your Societies.
 You begun to be a Body soon after Eng-
 land felt it self to be a Nation; I mean,
 in that acceptable Year of the Lord, 1688.
 when he proclaim'd Deliverance to the Cap- Iſa. lxi. 1.
 tives, and the opening of the Prison-doors
 to them that were bound. Our Morals
 were gone with our Laws a long time
 before. Each of 'em lay at the mercy
 of a Dispensing Power. The Country
 that was teaching our Kings to rule
 without Parliaments, had gone a great
 way to make the People live *without a* Eph. ii. 12.
God in the world. A general Flood of
 Debauchery, Swearing, breaking the
 Sabbath, and Gaming, were found a
 proper means, first to stupify, and then
 to enslave us. And indeed we were so
 doz'd

doz'd in the Loyalty of the Day, that they thought their time was come, for *Romish* Priests to make Orders, and *Irish* Dragoons to execute 'em.

If the *English* Courage had not bin sily weaken'd by the Enchantments of Luxury, we might have come by our Revolution much sooner. Our Tragedy had a great deal in it of *Samson's*: We fell into the hands of a Party, who practis'd with *Dalilah*, that they might bring us to *Dagon*. Giving a loose to *Lasciviousness*, *Lusts*, *Excess of Wine*, *Revelings*, *Banquettings*, and *abominable Idolatries*; (This) was the way to lull the Nation asleep, and then cut off those *Locks of Hair* in which our great *Strength* lay, as they were the Pledges of a Divine Presence with us. There were some Attempts, to go out and shake our selves, as at other times; but we wist not that God was departed from us.

1 Pet. iv. 3.

Judg. xvi.
20.

For how many years was Sobriety scandalous, and not to be deliver'd from the Imputation of Fanaticism? 'Twas a great deal more out of fashion for a Man to follow his Conscience than his Lust. The chief Doctrines of the Times were the Sacredness of Kings, the absolute

lute Authority of their Will, the Necessity of a passive Obedience to it, and the Damnation of resisting. This was the Cry of a greedy Party, who at last brought down upon themselves the full fate of those words, *He that saith to the Wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the People curse, Nations shall abhor him.* Prov. xxiv 24.

At that time we had Societies for Information, by which Craft a great many got their Wealth; but a Design to better the Morals of People, was a running the risk of all your own Liberty. They that make a Man an Offender for a word, are laying a snare for him that reproves in the Gate, and turn aside the Just for a thing of nought. But God had pity on his great Name, which we had profan'd; and when the Workers of Iniquity had so little knowledg to eat up his People as they eat Bread, then the Salvation of Israel came out of Sion. After we had heard nothing for several years, but a Demand of the things that are Cesar's, the Revolution render'd to God the things that are God's. Acts xix. 25. Isa. xxix. 21. Ezek. xxxvi. 21. Ps. xiv, 4, 7

A kind Providence rais'd us up One who had the Title of the Lord's Anointed from something better than a Ceremony.

E

mony.

Iſa. xliii.
13.

mony. The Account of *Cyrus* is fitted to him; Religion and Liberty were the Twin-Glories of the Cause they both engag'd in. It might be ſaid of each as it is of one; *I have rais'd him up in Righteouſneſs, and I will direct all his ways; he ſhall build my Cities, and he ſhall let go my Captives.* We owe Parliaments and Societies for Reformation to the ſame Turn.

How dear your Deſign was to the late *Royal Pair*, and is to *her preſent Majeſty*, appears from the * Letters, Proclamations, and Acts of Parliament, for the ſuppreſſing of Vice. And if I tell you, that *Darius's* Bounty went further than Words, you know how to apply the Paſſage, and remember when it was your own caſe. The Order is: *I make a Decree what ye ſhall do to the Elders of theſe Jews, for the building of this Houſe of God; that of the King's Goods, even of the Tribute beyond the River, forthwith Expences be given to theſe Men, that they be not hinder'd.*

* See the *Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners.*

From the whole Story in our Text we see, that God never wants Tools for the diffusing his own Honour. Some of these Kings were hearty in the Cause; others look'd upon it as a narrowing of their Royalty: But still the Work went on, tho in various degrees. What an Encouragement is this, for us *not to be afraid of their Revilings, but to sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself in our Hearts, and make him to be our Fear and our Dread*; because, we see, there are none so great, but he can either turn their Hearts, or tie their Hands. Isa. viii. 12

III. The Third and Last thing, which we meet with in the Text, is the SUCCESS of this Building: *They prosper'd thro the prophesying of Haggai the Prophet, and Zecharias the Son of Iddo.*

Setting up Temples seems to be an Act of Natural Religion, because we find it done among the Gentiles: tho what the Jews did, was, like every other Circumstance of their Worship, under the Conduct of mere Revelation. I take your Endeavours to be of the former sort. Reclaiming an impudent Sinner approves it self to the common Reason

of Mankind. The Heathen that *knew not the Law*, did in this kind *the things contain'd in the Law*. If we had no Bibles to direct us, a Swearer would be an Abomination to Men. There is that in human Nature, that will call it an *heinous Crime, and an Iniquity to be punish'd by the Judges*. But you may, from this instance, observe, That

Job xxxi.
II.

Duties of Natural Religion are best promoted by Revelation. Tho there are Rules and Arguments in Conscience, for doing several things; yet they go better forwards, when we have new Instructions from Heaven. Your Design of Reformation is what the Law requires; but it's the Gospel that explains the Beauty of it, and fixes the Motive. When *Jerusalem* was to be built, 'tis no more than recovering the Rights of human Nature; yet *Prophets* are rais'd up. And if you look to the first six Chapters of *Zechariah*, you will find no less than *ten Visions*; and all of 'em refer to the Prosperity of the City and the Temple. God puts matters into such a way, that he may *hide Pride from Man*, and secure the main Glory to himself. By this means also he breathes an Hope
into

into his People, and gives the Enemy
 such a Blast, that they are *cast down in* Neh.vi.16
their own eyes, when they perceive this Work
to be wrought of our God.

But my chief Design is to show you,
how the Prophets help'd them, or what
 Success they were capable of giving.
 'Twas not their personal Courage, In-
 tegrity, or Wisdom, that were so sig-
 nificant to the Building; but *their Pro-*
phesying: so that this turns the whole
 Reputation upon him that sent them.
 As to the Men themselves, they were
 liable to the common Passions and Frail-
 tyes of Nature: 'Twas their Message
 that did so much to the Prosperity of
 the Temple. God himself argues upon
 this Distinction; *Your Fathers, where are* Zech.i.5,6
they? And the Prophets, do they live for
ever? But my Word and Statutes which
I commanded, these took hold, and did
 the People good.

Thus the Case stands with those Mi-
 nisters, who so chearfully attend your
 Quarterly Assemblies. 'Tis not their
 Parts, or Learning, that will be of ser-
 vice any further than they are sanctify'd:
 That which falls to their share, is to
 act as *Stewards of the Mysterys of God,* 1Cor.iv.1.
 and

and tell you what he says. Now there are several ways, for them to help the Design.

1. They must be earnest with Heaven,
 Ps. xc. ult. *that the Beauty of the Lord may be upon you, and that he would establish the Work of your hands.* 'Tis indeed a general
 Ps. cxxii. 6 *Duty to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, and becomes all those that love her: But the Ties are stronger upon the Watchmen, whom God has set on her Walls, who should never hold their peace day or night.* They whose office it is to *make mention of the Lord, must not keep silence; they are to give him no rest, till he establish and make Jerusalem a Praise in the Earth.* You have lately heard how well the Parts of the Undertaking are sorted, that *Moses and Aaron* should be wrestling in Prayer *upon the Hill*; whilst *Joshua* is doing it, another way, *in the Valley*.

2. They explain the Nature of the Duty: And I will venture to say, this they have done in several Discourses, which will be of advantage, if ye keep
 1 Cor. xv. 2 *in memory what is preach'd unto you, except you have believ'd, or heard, in vain.* The Compassion to Souls, and Zeal for God; the Equality of your Justice a-
 broad,

broad, the Stanchness of your Care at home, that compound a Reformation-Temper, have bin insisted on by those who have *admonish'd you in the name of the Lord.*

3. 'Tis another part of their Duty to ply you with Arguments, some to make you willing, others to keep you so. Amongst which, there can be no better than *to consider him who endur'd* Heb. xii. 3. *the Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest ye be weary, and faint in your minds.*

4. 'Tis no little service that they are doing, who expound *the Visions of God*; and tell you, that *he, whom you look for,* Mal. iii. *will suddenly come to his Temple, even the* 1, 2. *Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in.* This is like *David's hearing a Sound in the top of the Mulberry-Trees,* 2 Sam. v. 24 which was to be a Signal of God's going before him: So that his Work could be no more than a gleaning after Omnipotence.

5. They are to answer the Difficultys that arise either from Laziness or Cowardice, the Spawn of Unbelief. When *Zerubbabel the Son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the Son of Jozadah,* begun to build the House, *with them were the Prophets of* Ezra v. 2. *God*

God helping them. There was a great Work upon *Haggai* and *Zechariah*. For,

First, Some pleaded, this was not a proper season of doing it. This is the Talk of the Sluggard, who is *wiser in his own conceit, than seven Men that can render a Reason*. The People said, *the Time is not come, the Time that the Lord's House should be built*. But what a weight does the Answer fall with? *Is it Time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled Houses, and this House lie wast?* 'Tis never out of season for you to be rich and honorable; you're always ready at an Opportunity of Trade and Greatness, and must God's Glory give way to so poor an Argument?

Besides, the Plea may be wrong in Fact: 'Tis certain, *the Restitution of all things* draws nearer every day: and tho
 Acts i. 7. *'tis not for you to know the Times and Seasons, that the Father has put in his own power*; yet a little more Extent and Flame to your Zeal would make us *lift up our Heads* with an Opinion, that it's
 Mat. xxiv. 33. *near, even at the doors*. 'Tis the Argument of a *slothful Servant*, *My Lord delays his coming*; and Idleness is the Principle that makes him talk so.

Secondly,

Secondly, Some thought they could live well enough without a Temple; but in that case *the God of this World had* 2Cor.iv.4. *blinded their eyes*: For, says the Prophet, *Ye look'd for much, and lo, it came to* Hag.i. 9. *little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it: Why, saith the Lord of Hosts? Because of my House that is wast, and ye run every man to his own House.* And when they fell into other measures, he gives them a sacred Pawn of Mercy: *Consider now, from this day and upward,* Chap. ii. *from the four and twentieth day of the* 18, 19. *ninth month, even from the day that the Foundation of the Lord's Temple was laid; consider it——from this day will I bless you.*

This is an Argument that belongs to us. Will any Person say, that the Nation made a brighter figure in War, or any thing else that's valuable, whilst Swearing was unrebuk'd, and Debauchery had the Example and Leave of the Court? Whilst *the Wicked walk'd on* Pf.xii. ult. *every side, and the Vilest of Men were exalted?* Was it better with us then, than it is now? I know, there are *Murmurers and Complainers, walking after their own Lusts, who make it their busi-*

F
ness

ness to tell us so ; but 'tis within the compass of an indifferent Memory to contradict 'em.

We had indeed a large Import from *France*, which brought us under all the Calamitys of War in a Time of Peace. By this Commerce, they suck'd away the Spirits of the Nation : as if *England* was to be the unhappy Instance of what the Prophet says ; *Whoredom, and Wine, and new Wine take away the Heart.*

And I may dare to say, as the Reformation grows amongst us, there will be a fuller Appearance of Success against the Enemy. 'Tis scarce to be expected, that they should be earnest to save their Country, who have thrown away their Souls ; or that he will do much in the Cause of his Religion, who stabs the Name of his God. For besides the weakning our Hopes of a Divine Blessing with us, there's a great deal of odds in the nature of the thing, between a Man's fighting from a Principle of Duty, from a Love to Christ, and an Hope in him, and doing it with the Stupidity of a Brute, only *as an Horse rushes into the Battel.* We read of God's *bathing his Sword in Heaven* ; which mighty Phrase

led a Great Man (whose Memory will *Mr. Howe.*
 be always *precious*) into a fine Thought
 to this purpose : Faith conquers, as God
 does, by *bathing the Sword in Heaven* ;
 and when it has once got a *Celestial Edge*,
 it falls with weight enough to *subdue*
Kingdoms, obtain Promises, turn the Ar- *Heb. xi.*
mies of the Aliens to flight, and out of *33, 34.*
weakness to make strong.

Thirdly, The Discouragements of some
 arise from the vast Inequality there is
 between our Reformation, and what they
 have remember'd. Thus it was among
 the Jews : *Many of the Priests and Le-* *Ezr. iii. 12.*
uites, and chief of the Fathers, who were
antient Men, that had seen the first House,
when the Foundation of this House was laid
before their eyes, wept with a loud Voice.
 And says God to 'em, *This is nothing in* *Hag. ii. 3.*
your eyes in comparison of the other. And
 yet, as I have shown you, *the Glory of*
the latter House was greater than the for-
mer ; because there God was manifest, *1 Tim. iii.*
not only in Visions, and Types, and Or-
dinances of Worship, but in the Flesh.
 And who knows what Reserves of Ho-
 nour there may be for your Underta-
 king, above the Attainments of former
 Ages ?

When I read of a Day, wherein Devotion was more common, and Sobriety almost universal, it carries a Pleasure quite thro my Soul: We cannot think of this, without a wish that *our Eyes may see, what our Ears have heard, and our Fathers have told us.* Nevertheless, there's one Circumstance of advantage in our Case, which was not in theirs. After they had united for some time against the Immorality of the Day, they fell all to pieces about the Varieties of Worship. Our Undertaking, I hope, is the Reverse of this. In those days Division kill'd the Reformation, in ours Reformation is a good step to heal the Division. And therefore the People, whose Interest it is to keep the Breach open amongst us, have the deepest abhorrence of your Societies.

But what a *Glory* will the Spirit of Love be to *the latter House*? It shows the World, that tho Opinions about lesser matters have bin maintain'd with an ill Transport on both sides; yet when Religion has cool'd us, and brought us back to our selves, we can jointly follow *the things that make for Peace*: As *Members of the same Body*, we come into ways of mutual

Reformation of Manners.

37

mutual Dependence; *The Eye* no longer ^{1 Cor. xii.}
saying to the Hand, I have no need of thee. ^{21.}

Thus I have open'd out your Work,
your Authority and Supports: I can raise
no other Exhortation from 'em, than
what *Haggai* himself does; *Be strong, O* Hag. ii. 4.
Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong,
O Joshua the Son of Josedeck the High-
Priest; and be strong, all ye People of
the Land, and work: for I am with you,
saith the Lord of Hosts. Only remember
to fetch all your Supplies from Christ,
and make the whole Return of your
Praise to him; for as *he must build the* Zech. vi.
Temple of the Lord, so he shall bear the ^{13.}
Glory.

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